

Francis Hopkinson House  
Bordentown, Burlington County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Francis Hopkinson House  
Bordentown, Burlington County, New Jersey

Owner: Judge Harold B. Wells

Date of Erection: 1750

Architect:

Builder: John Emley

Present condition: Good - much altered

Number of stories: Three

Materials of construction: Foundation - stone

Floors - wood

Exterior walls - yellow brick

Interior walls - plastered

Roof - mansard at present;  
standard roof originally;  
slate and tin

Historical Data:

John Emley erected the Hopkinson house in 1750; for many years he kept a store in it.

Francis Hopkinson, after whom the house is named, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a delegate to the Continental congress, author of the famous satire "The Battle of Kegs," and an artist of ability. He was a member of the committee appointed in 1776 to prepare the "Great Seal of the

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State"; it was he who was chosen by the committee to design the seal. Governor Livingston appointed Hopkinson Justice of the State, an office he held until 1779, when he was made Judge of the Court of Admiralty of Pennsylvania.

During the Revolution the house was nearly burned; Captain James Ewald, a distinguished Hessian officer, saved it. He became engrossed in the library and the mechanical and mathematical instruments it contained. While his soldiers were putting out the fire he had ordered started, he wrote in one of the books in the library, "This man is one of the greatest rebels; nevertheless, if we dare to conclude from the library and mechanical and mathematical instruments, he must be a very learned man."

When Hopkinson died in 1791, the home-  
stead was inherited by his son Joseph. Joseph  
was a Judge of the District Court of the United  
States and author of "Hail Columbia".

Bibliography:

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Jersey Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1902

Material collected by George De Cou,  
Historian of Burlington County Historical  
Society

Walter C. Rutt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

Rev. Aug. 20, 1936

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## A D D E N D U M

Apparently Francis Hopkinson never owned the house that bears his name. It was bought and owned by Joseph Borden. After Borden's death his widow became the owner. Since she outlived Francis, it became the property of Joseph, Francis' son, by her will in 1807. It remained in the Hopkinson family until 1915 when it was purchased by the present owner, Judge Harold B. Wells.

Francis Hopkinson married Nancy Borden on September 1, 1768. They lived in Philadelphia where Francis was engaged in the Mercantile business. About 1773-4 Hopkinson moved to Bordentown. His business had declined; however, his chief reason for moving was that through his friend William Franklin, then governor, and his father-in-law, a leader in provincial affairs, he had an excellent opportunity for political advancement. Francis and his family lived in the house of his father-in-law.

There is a tradition that Count Donop used the Hopkinson House as a headquarters while in Bordentown. The name of Tom Paine is linked with the house for Paine visited Hopkinson. Later on Joseph Borden was entertained by Francis Hopkinson.

## Bibliography:

The above information was collected  
by Mrs. H. B. Wells

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